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The Message of Christmas Day

THE message of Christmas day is intended for all men, for all times, for all conditions of existence.

A Christmas Hymn.

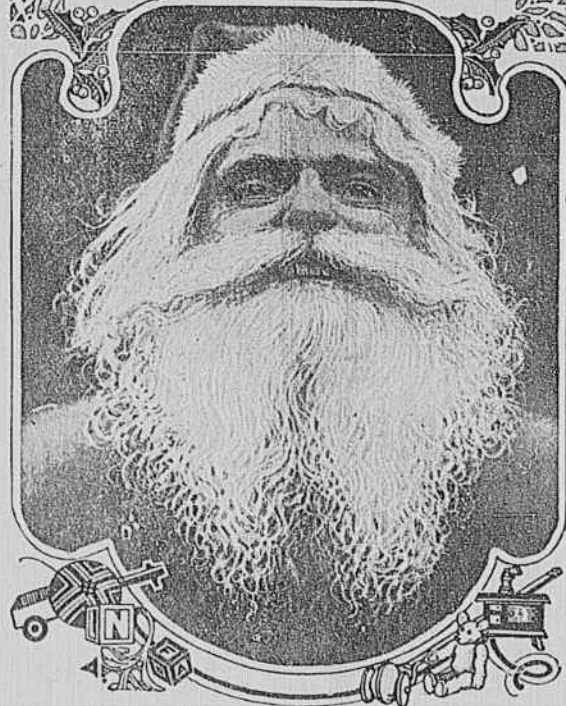
By Richard Watson Gilder.



Bring love, true love alone, and lay it at his feet.

Tell me what is this innumerable throng Singing in the heavens a loud angelic song? These are they who come with swift and shining feet from round about the throne of God the Lord of Light to greet.

MERRY CHRISTMAS, EVERYBODY!



The Life of Christ

By Charles Dickens

What images do I associate with the Christmas music as I see these images set forth on the Christmas tree? Known before all others, keeping far apart from the others.

Mystery of the Incarnation.

For the sun to fall from its sphere and be degraded into a wandering atom, for an angel to be turned out from heaven and be converted into a fly or a worm, had not been such abasement, for they were but creatures before, and so they would abide still, though in an inferior rank.

His Humble Life.

We hear now and then an insinuation that Christianity is a religion for the rich, invented perhaps by the rich to keep down the poor.

Read the Christmas ads.

The Spirit of Christmas

THAT the spirit of Christmas is upon us one need but walk through the shops these days and be convinced. Visit the toy department of any store and learn that Christmas, with its kind old Santa Claus, and, in fact, the whole Yuletide spirit lie deep in the hearts of the children.

In the Heart of Mary.

Annie Johnson Flint in Atlantic Monthly.



To-day, little Son, little Son, To-day Thou art safe with me.

Mother of Sorrows, I— But my babe is on my breast. He resteth quiet there Who bringeth the weary rest; He lieth calm and still Who bringeth the troubled peace, Who openeth prison doors And giveth the sad release, for there reacheth him yet no sound, No echo of cry or moan. Today, little Son, little Son, Today thou art all my own.

Mother of Sorrows, I— And the sword shall pierce my heart. But today I hold him close from the cruel world apart. It wafte with smiling and gibes, With scourging and hatred and scorn. With hyssop and wormwood and gall, The cross and the crown of thorn. The nations shall watch him die, Lifted up on the tree. But today, little Son, little Son, Today thou art safe with me.

Their Heavenly Vision. On the northeast side of Bethlehem is a deep valley, the bottom and sides of which afford rich and abundant pasturage for sheep and cattle. During the night in which Mary's child was born the shepherds of Bethlehem, with their flocks, occupied this valley. Not a sound broke upon the stillness of nature except the low voiced conversation of the shepherds as they sat in groups and cheered the hours of watching with simple dialogue or rustic story. While they were thus employed, not dreaming of the vision that was about to break upon their senses. Such music sweet Their hearts and ears did greet As never was by mortal fingers struck. And immediately an angel of the Lord came to them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them. In the presence of this heavenly glory the simple shepherds were struck dumb with surprise and fear. They knew not what the heavenly vision meant until in soothing tones the angel said to them: 'Fear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.' And before the wondering shepherds could recover their self possession there suddenly surrounded their sight A globe of circular light. That with long beams the shames' face'd night array'd; The helmet cherubim And swarfed seraphim, Are seen in glittering ranks with wings display'd. Harping in loud and solemn choir, With unexpressive notes to heaven's new-born heir. Such music, as 'tis said, Before was never made Since when of old the songs of morning sung. While the Creator great His constellations set And the well balanced world on hinges hung And cast the dark foundations deep And hid the weltering waves their oozy channel keep. —Milton.

Now Let in the Spirit of Christ God pity the men and women who shut out of their hearts the spirit of Christ at Christmas time, even as he was shut out of the inn at Bethlehem. And the spirit of self and of selfishness is, more than anything else, supremely antagonistic to the spirit of Christ. God help us to exercise the spirit of selfish greed, essential sin, the tyranny of personal desires and of the unhallowed will, that darken the music of Christmas and all the year through mar the working out of God's plans in us and with us. Oh, to bring our own hearts fully into tune with the angels' song! Our Christmas cheer will seem the sweeter still When we an empty cup with kindness fill; Bring needed aid To light a shade, Or warm a breast that feels the wintry chill. This will accord with Bethlehem's primal ray. 'God will to men' should never pass away. Its truth sublime To end of time, Borne as the motto of our Christmas day.